

“What think ye of Christ?”

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A SERMON

PREACHED FROM MATTHEW *xxii.* 42.

AT

KENNINGTON COMMON,

IN THE YEAR, 1739,

BY THE

Rev. Mr. George Whitefield, A. B.

LATE OF PEMBROKE COLLEGE, OXFORD.



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THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES THE FIRST

BY

JOHN BURNET

OF LINCOLN'S INN

IN TWO VOLUMES

LONDON

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SERMON, &c.

"What think ye of Christ?"—Matt. xxii. 42.

WHEN it pleased the eternal Son of God to tabernacle amongst us, and to come preaching the glad tidings of salvation to a fallen world, different opinions were entertained by different parties concerning him. As to his person, some said he was Moses, others that he was Elias, Jeremiah, or one of the ancient prophets; few acknowledged him to be what he really was, God blessed for evermore. As to his doctrine, though the common people, being free from prejudice, and persuaded of the blessed effects of his going about to do good, for the generality, heard him gladly, and said that he was a good man; yet the envious, worldly-minded, self-righteous governors and teachers of the Jewish Church, being grieved at his success on one hand, and unable, as having never been taught of God, to understand the purity of his precepts, on the other, notwithstanding our Lord spake as never man spake, and did such miracles as no one could possibly do, unless God was with him, yet they not only were so infatuated as to say, that he deceived the people, but also were so blasphemous as to affirm, that he was in league with the devil himself, and cast out devils by Beelzebub the prince of them. Nay, our Lord's own brethren and kinsmen, according to the flesh, were so blinded by prejudice and unbelief, that on a certain day, when he went out to teach the multitudes in the fields, they sent to take hold on him, urging this as a reason for their conduct, viz — that he was beside himself.

Thus was the King and Lord of Glory judged by man's judgment, when made manifest in the flesh. Far be it from any of his ministers to expect any better treatment. No, if we come in the spirit and power of our master, in this, as in every other part of his sufferings, we must follow his steps. The like reproaches

which were cast on him, will be thrown on us also.— Those that received our Lord and his doctrine, will receive and hear us for his name's sake. The poor, blessed be God, as our present meetings abundantly testify, will receive the Gospel, and the common people hear us gladly; whilst those that are sitting in Moses's chair, and love to wear long robes, being ignorant of the righteousness which is of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and having never felt the power of God upon their own hearts, will be continually crying out against us as madmen, deceivers of the people, nay moreover, as acting under the influence of evil spirits.

But he is unworthy the name of a minister of the gospel of peace, who is unwilling, not only to have his name cast out as evil, but also to die for the truths of the Lord Jesus. It is the character of hirelings and false prophets, who care not for the sheep, to have all men speak well of them. "Blessed are you," says our Lord to his first apostles, and in them to all succeeding ministers, "when men speak all manner of evil against you falsely, for my name's sake." And indeed it is impossible but such offences must come, for men will always judge of others according to the principles from which they act themselves. And if they care not to yield obedience to the doctrines which we deliver, they must necessarily, in self-defence, speak against the preachers, lest they should be asked that question which the Pharisees of old feared to have retorted on them, if they confessed that John was a prophet, viz.—Why then did you not believe in him.

In all such cases we have nothing to do but to search our own hearts; and if we can assure our consciences before God, that we act with a single eye to his glory, we are cheerfully to go on in our work, and not in the least to regard what men or devils can do unto us.

But to return. You have heard what various thoughts were handed about concerning Jesus Christ, whilst here on earth; nor is he otherwise treated, now he is exalted to sit down at the right hand of his Father in heaven. A stranger to Christianity, was he to hear that we all profess to hold one Lord, would naturally

infer that we all thought and spoke one and the same thing about him. But, alas ! to our shame be it mentioned, though Christ be not divided in himself, yet professors are sadly divided in their thoughts about him. And that not only as to the circumstantialia of religion, but also as to those essential truths which must necessarily be received and believed by us, if ever we hope to be heirs of eternal salvation.

Some, and that I fear a multitude which no man can easily number, there are amongst us, who call themselves Christians, and yet seldom or never think of Jesus Christ at all. They can think of their shops and their farms, their plays, their balls, their assemblies and horse-races, entertainments which directly tend to exclude religion out of the world, but as for Christ, the author and finisher of faith, the Lord who has bought them with his precious blood, and who alone is worthy of all their thoughts, he alone is shunned with all the arts of business and amusement, and therefore far from all.—Believe me, O ye earthly, sensual, carnally-minded professors, how little soever you may think of Christ now, or however industriously you strive to keep him out of your thoughts, by pursuing the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, yet there is a time coming when you will wish you had thought of Christ more, and of your profits and pleasures less. For the gay, the polite, the rich, also must die, as well as others, and leave their pomps, their vanities, and all their wealth behind them. And, oh ! what thoughts you will entertain concerning Jesus Christ in that hour !

But I must not pursue these reflections ; they would carry me too far from the main design of this discourse, which is to shew what those, who are truly desirous to know how to worship God in spirit and in truth, ought to think concerning Jesus Christ, whom God has sent to be the end of the law for righteousness to all them that believe in his name.

I trust, my brethren, you are more noble than to think me too strict or scrupulous in thus attempting to regulate even your thoughts about Jesus Christ. For by our thoughts, as well as by our words and actions, are we

to be judged at the great day. And in vain do we hope to believe in or worship Christ aright, unless the principles, on which our faith and practice are founded, are agreeable to the form of sound words, delivered to us in the scriptures of truth.

Besides, many deceivers are gone abroad in the world; mere heathen morality, and not the purity and perfection of Jesus Christ, is preached in most of our churches. If Christ be mentioned, it is only by the bye. And how should people think rightly of Jesus Christ, of whom they have scarcely heard? Bear with me a little then, whilst, in order to inform your consciences, I ask you a few questions concerning Jesus Christ, for there is no other name given under heaven whereby we can be saved, but his.

And first.—What think you about the person of Christ? Whose son is he? This is the question our Lord puts to the Pharisees, in the word following the text; and never was it more necessary to repeat this question than in these last days, for numbers that are called after the name of Christ, and I fear many that pretend to preach him, are so far advanced in the blasphemous chair, as openly to deny that he is really, truly, and properly God. But no one that ever was partaker of his spirit, will thus speak lightly of him. No, if our Lord's true disciples are asked, as Peter and his brethren were, But whom say ye that I am? They will reply, without hesitation, Thou art Christ the Son of the ever-living God. For the confession of our Lord's divinity is the rock upon which he builds his church. Was it possible to take this away, the gates of hell would quickly prevail against it. My brethren, if Jesus Christ be not very God of very God, I would never preach the gospel of Christ again! For it would not be Gospel, that is to say, glad tidings of salvation; it would be only a system of mere morality; and if so, Seneca, Cicero, or any of the heathen philosophers, would be as good a Saviour as Jesus of Nazareth. It is the divinity of our Lord that gives the efficacy to his death, and makes him such an high priest as became us, viz. one who by the infinite merits of his sufferings could

make a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, satisfaction and oblation for the sins of the whole world. And whatsoever minister of the church of England makes use of her forms, and eats of her bread, and yet holds not this doctrine, as I fear too many such are not only crept in, but countenanced and preferred amongst us, such an one belongs only to the synagogue of satan. He is not a child or minister of God. No, he is a wolf in sheep's clothing. He is none other than a child and minister of that wicked one the devil.

Many will think these hard sayings : But I think it no breach of charity to affirm, that an Arian or a Socinian, cannot be a Christian. For the one would make us believe Jesus Christ is only a created God, which is a self-contradiction ; and the other would have us look on him only as a good man, and, instead of owning his death to be an atonement for the sins of the world, would persuade us that Christ died only to seal the truth of his doctrine with his blood ! But if Jesus Christ be not more than a mere man, nay, if he be not truly God, he was indeed, as accounted by the Jews, the greatest blasphemer that ever appeared in the world, for he accepted of divine adoration from the man that had been born blind, as we read, *John ix* 38. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. Which must be understood of religious adoration, as coming of faith in him. Besides, if Christ be not properly God, our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins ; for no created being, though of the highest order, could possibly merit any thing at God's hands. No, it was our Lord's divinity that alone qualified him to take away the sins of the world : and therefore, we hear that St. John pronounces so positively, that the word, i. e. Jesus Christ, was not only with God, but was God. For the like reason, St. Paul says, that he was in the form of God, that in him dwelt all the fulness of the God-head bodily. Nay, Jesus Christ himself assumes the title which God gave to himself when he sent Moses to deliver his people Israel, before Abraham was, says he, I AM. And again, I and my Father are ONE. Which last words, though our modern infidels would evade and wrest, as they do,

the other scriptures, to their own damnation, yet it is evident the Jews understood as though by them he made himself equal with God, otherwise, why did they stone him as a blasphemer? Now, why should it be thought a breach of charity to affirm, that those who deny the divinity of Jesus Christ, in the strictest sense of the word, cannot be Christians? for they are greater infidels than the devils themselves; they confessed that they knew who he was, even the holy one of God.— They not only believe, but, which is more than the unbelievers of this generation do, they tremble! And was it possible for Arius and Socinus, those arch-heretics, to be released from those chains of darkness under which they are now reserved, till the judgment of the great day, and to appear in this congregation, I am persuaded they would inform us, that Hell had convinced them of the divinity of Jesus Christ, and they would advise all their followers to renounce their principles, lest they should come into the same place, and thereby increase their and each other's torment.

But 2dly. What think you of the manhood or incarnation of Christ? For Christ was not only God, but he was God and man in person. Thus run the text and context: "When the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, *What think ye of Christ?* Whose son is he? They say unto him, the Son of David. How then," says our divine Master, "does David in spirit call him Lord?" From which passage it is evident that we do not think rightly of the person of Jesus Christ, unless we believe him to be perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.

For it is on this account that he is called Christ, or the annointed, i. e. one who through his own voluntary offer was set apart by the Father, and strengthened and qualified by the annointing or communication of the Holy Ghost, to be a Mediator between him and offending man.

The reason, or first cause, why the Son of God took upon him our nature, was the fall of our first parents. I hope there is no one here present so absurdly atheis-

tical as to think that man made himself. No, it was God that made us, and not we ourselves. And I would willingly think that no one would be so blasphemous as to suppose, that if God did make us, he made us such creatures as we now find ourselves to be; for this would be giving God's word the lie, which tells us, that in the image of God, not in the image of the devil, which we now bear on our souls, made he man. Far be it from us to think otherways, than that as God made man, so he made him perfect. He placed him in the garden of Eden, and condescended to enter into covenant with him, promising him eternal life upon conditions of an unsinning obedience of faith, and threatening eternal death, if he broke his law of love, by eating the forbidden fruit.

Man did eat, and thereby involved both himself and us in that curse, which God the righteous judge had declared the consequence of his disobedience. But here begins that mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh, to destroy the works of the devil? For, sing, O heavens, and rejoice O earth! Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, light of light, very God of very God, offers to die to make an atonement for his transgression, and to fulfil all righteousness in his stead. But because it was impossible for him to do and suffer this as he was God, and since man had offended, it was necessary it should be done by man, rather than we should perish. This everlasting God, this Prince of Peace, this ancient of days, in the fulness of time, had a body prepared for him, and became an infant of a span long. In this body he performed a complete obedience to the law of God, whereby he, in our stead, fulfilled the covenant of works, and at last became subject to death, even the death upon the cross; that as God he might satisfy, and as man he might obey and suffer. and being God and man in one person, might thereby procure an union between God and his fallen creatures.

And now what think ye of this love of Christ? Do not you think it was wondrous great, especially when you consider that we were Christ's bitter enemies, and that he would have been infinitely happy in himself,

though we had perished for ever. Whatever you may think of it, I know the blessed angels, who are not so much concerned in this mystery of godliness as we, think most highly of it. They do, they will desire to look into and admire it through all eternity. Why, Oh why, ye sinners, will you not think of this love of Christ? surely it must melt down the most hardened heart. Whilst I am speaking, the thoughts of this infinitely condescending love fires and warms my soul! I could dwell on it for ever. But it is expedient for you that I should ask you another question concerning Jesus Christ.

3dly.—What think you of being justified by Jesus Christ? I believe I can answer for some of you; but many, I fear, think to be justified, or looked upon as righteous in God's sight, without Jesus Christ. All such will find themselves most dreadfully mistaken; for out of Christ, God is a consuming fire! Others satisfy themselves with thinking that Christ was God and man, and that he came into the world to save sinners in general: Whereas their chief thoughts ought to be how they may be assured that Jesus Christ came into the world to save them in particular. The life I now live in the flesh says the apostle, is by faith of the Son of God, who loved ME, and gave himself for ME; observe for ME! For it is this immediate application of Jesus Christ to our own hearts, that renders his merits effectual to our eternal salvation. If Christ be not truly Emmanuel, or God with us, he cannot be the author and finisher of our faith and salvation. Others there are who go still further; for they think that Jesus Christ is God-man, and that he is to be received into their hearts, and that they can be justified in God's sight only in and through him; but then they believe in him only as in part their Saviour. They are for doing what they can themselves, and then they will accept of Jesus Christ to make up the deficiencies of their righteousness.—This is the sum and substance of our modern divinity. And, was it possible for me to know the thoughts of most that hear me this day, I believe they would tell me this is the foundation they have laid, and built upon.

for some years, for their eternal salvation. Is it not then high time, my brethren, for you to entertain quite different thoughts concerning justification by Jesus Christ? For if you think thus, you are in the case with those unhappy Jews, who went about establishing their own righteousness, and would not submit to, and consequently never attained that righteousness which is of God, by faith in Christ Jesus our Lord. What think you then, my brethren, if I tell you that we are to be justified freely through faith in Jesus Christ without any regard to any works or fitness foreseen in us at all? For salvation is the free gift of God. I know no fitness in man, but a fitness to be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone for ever. Our righteousness, in God's sight, is but as filthy rags; He cannot away with it. Our holiness, if we have any, is not the cause, but the effect of our justification in God's sight. We love God, because He first loved us. We must not come to God as the proud Pharisees did, bringing in, as it were, a reckoning of our services; but we must come in the temper and language of the poor publican, smiting upon our breast, and saying, God be merciful to me a sinner! Then shall we find, and know for a truth, that Jesus Christ justifies us whilst we are ungodly, and that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. The poor in spirit, who are willing to renounce their own righteousness and rely wholly on the righteousness of Jesus Christ, they only can be received as members of his church and kingdom. The righteousness, the whole righteousness of Jesus Christ is to be imputed to us, instead of our own; for we are not under the law, but under grace. And as many as walk after this rule, peace be on them; for they, and they only, are the true Israel of God. In the great work of man's redemption, boasting is entirely excluded, which could not be, if one of our works was to be joined with the merits of Christ. Our salvation is all of God, from the beginning to the end. It is not of works, lest any man should boast. Man has no hand in it. It is Christ that is to be made to us of God the Father, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and eter-

nal redemption. His active as well as passive obedience is most freely given to poor sinners. He has fulfilled all righteousness for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. All that we have to do, is to lay hold of this righteousness by faith. And in that very moment, when we do apprehend it by a lively faith, in that very moment shall we be assured, that the blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed us from all sin. For the promise is to us, and to our children, and as many as the Lord our God shall call. If we, and our whole houses believe, we shall be saved as well as the jailor and his house; for the righteousness of Christ is an everlasting, as well as a perfect righteousness. It is as effectual to all them that believe in him now, as it was formerly, and so it will be till time shall be no more.

Search the scriptures, as the Bereans did, and see whether these things are not so. Search St. Paul's epistles to the Romans and Galatians, and there you will find this doctrine so plainly taught you, that unless you have eyes that see not, he that runs may read. Search the eleventh article of our church, and there you will find the opinion of our wise reformers in this matter; for thus speaks the article.—“We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings.”

This doctrine of our free justification by faith in Christ Jesus, however censured and evil spoken of by our present masters in Israel, was highly esteemed by our wise fore-fathers. For, in the following words of the fore-mentioned article, it is called a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort; and so indeed it is, to all that are weary and heavy laden, and are truly willing to find rest in Jesus Christ.

This is gospel, this is glad tidings of great joy to all that feel themselves poor, lost, undone, damned sinners. Ho! every one that thirsteth, come unto the water of life, and drink freely: Come and buy without money and without price. Behold a fountain opened in your Saviour's side, for sin, and for all uncleanness. Look

unto him whom you have pierced. Look unto him by faith, and verily you shall be saved, though you came hither only to ridicule and blaspheme, and never thought of God or of Christ before.

Not that you must think God will save you, because, or on account of your faith; for faith is a work, and then you would be justified for your works; but when I tell you we are to be justified by faith, I mean, that faith is the instrument whereby the sinner receives the redemption of Jesus Christ into his own soul: and whosoever receives such a faith, for it is the free gift of God, he may lift up his head with boldness: he needs not fear; he is passed from death to life, and shall not come into condemnation. This is the gospel which we preach: If any man or angel preach any other doctrine than this, of our being freely justified through faith in Christ Jesus, we have the authority of the great apostle to pronounce him accursed.

And now, my brethren, what think you of this foolishness of preaching? To you that have tasted the good word of life, and been enlightened to see the riches of God's free grace in Christ Jesus, I am persuaded it is precious, and has distilled like the dew into your souls. And oh, that all were like-minded; but I fear numbers are ready to go away contradicting and blaspheming. Tell me, are there not many of you saying within yourselves, "This is a licentious doctrine; this preacher is opening a door for encouragement in sin?" But this does not surprise or terrify me at all. It is a stale antiquated objection, as old as the doctrine of justification itself. And which, by the way, is not much to the credit of those who urge it now, it was first made by an infidel. St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, after he had, in the five first chapters, most plainly proved the doctrine of justification by faith only, in the sixth brings in an unbeliever, saying, Shall we continue in sin then, that grace may abound? But as he rejected such an inference with a God forbid, so do I: For the faith which we preach is not a dead speculative faith, 'an assenting to a thing credible, as credible,' as it is commonly defined. It is not a faith of the head only,

but of the heart. It is a living principle, wrought in the soul by the spirit of the ever-living God, convincing the sinner of his lost undone condition by nature, enabling him to lay hold on the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, freely offered him in the gospel, and continually exciting him, out of a principle of love and gratitude, to shew forth the same, by abounding in every good word and work. This is the sum and substance of the doctrine that has been delivered: And if this belicentious doctrine, judge ye. No, my brethren, this is not decrying all good works, but teaching you how to do the same from a proper principle. For to use the words of our church in another of her articles, "Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of the spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ; rather, for that they are not done as God has willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin." So that they, who bid you do and then believe, are just as wise as those who would persuade you to build a beautiful magnificent house, without laying any foundation.

The doctrine of our free justification by faith in Christ Jesus, like other gospel truths, may and will be abused by men of corrupt minds, and reprobate concerning the faith; but they who receive the truth of God in the love of it, will always be showing their faith by their works. For this reason, St. Paul, after telling the Ephesians, that by grace they were saved through faith; not of works, lest any man should boast; immediately adds, For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. And in his epistle to Titus, having given him directions, chap. iii. 7, to tell people that they were justified by grace, he directly subjoins, verse 8, I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works. Agreeably to this, we are told in our twelfth article, that "albeit that good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment, yet are they pleasing

and acceptable to God through Christ, and do spring necessarily out of a true and lively faith, insomuch, that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit."

Oh! what would I give that this article was duly understood, and preached by all that have subscribed to it! The ark of the Lord would not then be driven into the wilderness, nor so many dissent from the church of England. I am fully persuaded, that it is not so much on account of our rites and ceremonies, as of our not preaching the truth as it is in Jesus, that many of our churches are become so empty of true believers. Did not we fall from our established doctrines, few, comparatively speaking, would fall from the established church. Where Christ is preached, though it be in a church or common, dissenters of all denominations have, and do most freely come: but if our clergy will preach only the law, and not show the way of salvation by faith in Christ Jesus, that is, the gospel, the charge of schism, at the day of judgment, I fear, will chiefly lie at their door. The true sheep of Christ know the voice of Christ's true shepherds, and strangers they will not hear.

Observe, my dear brethren, the words of the article. Good works "are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification." How then can they go before, or any way be the cause of it? No, our persons must be justified before our performances can be accepted. God had respect to Abel before he had respect to his offering; and therefore the righteousness of Jesus Christ must be freely imputed to, and apprehended by us, thro' faith, before we can offer an acceptable sacrifice to God. For out of Christ, as I intimated before, God is a consuming fire; and whatsoever is not of faith in Christ, is sin.

The grand cause of people's mistaking the doctrine of free justification, I believe is owing to their not rightly considering the different persons St. Paul and St. James wrote to in their epistles, as also the different kinds of justification each of them writes about. The former every where asserts, and that with line upon

line, and argument upon argument, that we are justified by faith only. The latter puts this question, Was not Abraham justified by works? From whence many have blended and joined together faith and works, in order to justify us in the sight of God. But this is a mistake all over; for St. Paul was writing to the Jewish proselytes, who sought righteousness by the works, not only of the ceremonial, but also of the moral law. But he tells them, they were to look for justification in God's sight only, through the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, apprehended by faith. St. James wrote to such who abused the doctrine of free justification, and presumed they should be saved, (as numbers among us do now,) upon their barely professing to believe in Jesus Christ. These the holy apostle endeavours wisely to convince, that such a faith was no more like that which bringeth salvation, than a putrifying carcase is like a living man; and therefore it behoved all who would be blessed with faithful Abraham, to shew forth their faith by their works, as he did. For, was not Abraham justified by works? says he, i. e. Did he not prove that his faith was a true justifying faith, by which it brought forth good works? From whence it is plain, that St. James is talking of a justification before men. Shew me, says he, that is, demonstrate to me, or give me evidence, that thou hast a true faith, by thy works. Whereas St. Paul is talking only of our being justified in the sight of God; and thus he proves that Abraham was justified before ever the moral or ceremonial law was given to the Jews; for it is written, Abraham believed in the Lord, and it was counted to him for righteousness.

Take the substance of what has been said on this head in the few following words. Every man that is saved, is justified three ways. 1st. Meritoriously, by the death of Jesus Christ: It is the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses us from all sin. 2dly. Instrumentally, by faith: Faith is the means or instrument whereby the merits of Jesus Christ are applied to the sinner's heart. Ye are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus. 3dly. We are justified declaratively, by

good works, that is, good works declare and prove, both to ourselves and the world, that our faith is a true saving faith.

It may not be improper to illustrate this doctrine by an example or two. I suppose no one will pretend to say that there was any fitness in Zaccheus the publican, when he came to see Jesus, out of no better a principle than that whereby, perhaps, thousands are led to hear me preach, I mean curiosity. But Jesus Christ prevented and called him by his free grace, and sweetly, but most powerfully, inclined him to obey that call, as I pray God he may influence all you that hear me this day. Zaccheus received our Lord joyfully into his house and at the same time, by faith, received him into his heart. Zaccheus was then freely justified in the sight of God. But behold the immediate fruits of that justification! He stands forth in the midst, and as before he had believed in his heart, he now makes confession with his mouth, unto salvation; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four fold. And thus it will be with every poor sinner, as soon as ever God's dear Son is revealed in him by a living faith. He will have no rest in his spirit till, out of love and gratitude for what God has done for his soul, he shews forth his faith by his works.

Again, I suppose every body will grant that there was no fitness for salvation in the persecutor Saul, no more than there is in those persecuting zealots of these last days, who are already breathing threatenings, and, if it were in their power, would breathe out slaughters also against the disciples of the Lord. Now our Lord, we know, freely prevented him by his grace; Oh that he may also effectually call the persecutors of this generation! and when, by a light from heaven, he struck him to the ground, at the same time, by his spirit, he pricked him to the heart, convinced him of sin, and caused him to cry out, Who art thou, Lord? Christ replies, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. Faith then was instantaneously given him, and behold immediately Paul cries out, Lord, what wouldst thou have me to

do? And so will every poor soul that believes on the Lord Jesus with his whole heart, He will be asking, Lord, what shall I do for thee? Lord what wouldst thou have me to do? Not to justify himself, but only to evidence the sincerity of his love and thankfulness to his all merciful high priest, for plucking him as a fire brand out of the fire.

Perhaps many self-righteous persons among you may flatter yourselves, that you are not so wicked as either Zaccheus or Saul was, and consequently there is a greater fitness for salvation in you than in them; but if you think thus, indeed you think more highly of yourselves than you ought to think; for, by nature, we are all alike, all equally fallen short of the glory of God, all equally dead in trespasses and sins; and there needs the same almighty power to be exerted in converting any one of the most sober, good-natured, moral persons here present, as there was in converting the publican Zaccheus, or that persecutor Saul. And was it possible for you to ascend into the highest heavens, and to enquire of the spirits of just men made perfect, I am persuaded they would tell you, that this doctrine is from God. But we have a most sure word of prophecy, to which we would do well to take heed, as unto a light shining in a dark place. My brethren, the word is nigh you. Search the Scriptures. Beg of God to make you willing to be saved in this day of his power, and you shall all be taught of God. For it is not flesh and blood, but the spirit of Jesus Christ that alone can reveal these things unto you.

Fourthly & lastly, What think you of Jesus Christ's being formed within you? for whom Christ justifies, them he also sanctifies; although he find, yet he does not leave us unholy: a true Christian may not so properly be said to live, as Jesus Christ to live in him, for they only who are led by the spirit of Christ, who is God, are the sons of God.

As I observed before, so I tell you again, the faith which we preach is not a dead, but a lively active faith wrought in the soul, and working a thorough change, by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the whole man.—

Unless Christ be thus in you, notwithstanding you may be orthodox as to the foregoing principles, notwithstanding you may have good desires, and attend constantly on the means of grace, yet, in St. Paul's opinion, you are out of a state of salvation. Know ye not, says the apostle to the Corinthians, a church famous for its gifts, above any church under heaven, that Christ is in you, viz., by his spirit, unless you are reprobates?

For Christ came not only to deliver us from the guilt, but also from the power of our sins. Till he has done this, however he may be a saviour to others, we can have no assurance or well-grounded hope that he has saved us. For it is by receiving his blessed spirit into our hearts, and hearing him witnessing with our spirits, that we can be certified of our being sealed unto the day of redemption.

This, it must be confessed, is a great mystery; but marvel not at my asking you, what you think of Christ being formed within you? for either God must change his nature or ours. For, as in Adam we all have spiritually died, so all that are effectually saved, must by Christ, be spiritually made alive. His only end in dying and rising again, and interceding for us now in heaven, is to redeem us from the misery of our fallen nature, and, by the operations of his blessed spirit, to make us meet to be partakers of the heavenly inheritance with the saints in light. None but those that are thus changed by his grace here, shall appear with him in glory hereafter.

Examine yourselves therefore, my brethern, whether you are in the faith; prove your own selves, and think it not sufficient to say in your creed, I believe in Jesus Christ, for you do not believe; you are liars, you are reprobates, you are in a state of death, you take God's name in vain, and, when you call him Father, your prayers are turned into sin, unless you believe in Christ, so as to have your life and nourishment from him as the branches receive life and nourishment from the vine, or the members of the body natural from the head.

I know, indeed, the men of this generation deny

there is any such thing as spiritual sensation, or ought to be experienced like feeling Christ within them. But, alas ! to what a dreadful condition would such reduce us ! even to the state of the abandoned heathens, who St. Paul tells us, were past feeling. But the same apostle plainly declares, that as God is not far from every one of us, so, if haply we feel after him, he will be found of us. And again he teaches, that our Lord and Head is not untouched with the feeling of our infirmities, and that we ought also to have our several senses exercised, to discern good from evil. I may add here also, that, in our office for the visitation of the sick, the minister prays, that the Lord may make the sick person know and feel that there is no other name given under heaven to man, in whom, and through whom he may receive health and salvation, but only the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For there is a spiritual as well as a natural or corporeal feeling. And though this is not communicated to us in such a sensible manner as outward objects affect our outward senses, yet it is as real as any outward sensations, and its proper objects may be as truly felt and discerned by the soul, as any other can be felt by the body ; all that are born again of God know that I lie not.

What think ye, sirs, did Naaman feel when he was cured of his leprosy ! did the woman feel virtue coming out of Jesus Christ, when she touched the hem of his garment, and was cured of her disease ! so surely mayest thou feel, O sinner, when Jesus dwelleth in thy heart. I pray God to make you all to know and feel this, ere you depart hence, and for evermore !

Oh ! my brethern, my heart is enlarged towards you ! I trust I feel something of that hidden but powerful presence of Christ, which I am preaching to you. Indeed it is sweet, indeed it is exceeding comfortable. All the harm I wish you, that without cause are my enemies, is, that you felt the like. Believe me, though it would be hell to my soul to return to a natural state again, yet I would willingly change states with you for a little while, that you might feel what it is to have Jesus Christ dwelling in your hearts by faith, Oh,

do not turn your backs, do not let the devil hurry you away be not afraid of conviction. Do not think worse of the doctrine, because preached without the church-walls. Our Lord, in the days of his flesh, preached on a mount, a ship, a field; and I am persuaded many have felt his gracious presence here. Indeed we speak what we know. Oh, do not reject the kingdom of God against yourselves! be so wise as to receive our witness. I cannot, I will not let you go. Stay a while, and let us reason together. However lightly you may esteem your souls, I know our Lord has an unspeakable value for them. He thought them worthy of his precious blood: I beseech you therefore, O sinners, be ye reconciled to God. I hope you do not fear being accepted in the beloved. Behold he calls you; behold he prevents and follows you with his mercy.

And because many of you would not come to a church, behold he has sent forth his servants into the highways and hedges, to compel you to come in. Remember then, that, at such an hour of such a day, in such a year, in this place, you were all told what you ought to think concerning Jesus Christ. If you now perish, it will not be for lack of knowledge. I am free from the blood of you all. You cannot say I have been preaching damnation to you. You cannot say I have, like legal preachers, been requiring you to make brick without straw. I have not bid you make yourselves saints, and then come to God; but I have offered you salvation on as cheap terms as you can desire. I have offered you Christ's whole wisdom, Christ's whole righteousness, Christ's whole sanctification and eternal redemption, if you will but believe in him. If you say you cannot believe, you say right; for faith, as well as every other blessing, is the gift of God. But then it is free to all that confess themselves sinners, and sincerely ask it in his dear Son's name. Ask, then, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and a door of mercy shall be opened unto you. For if Christ has given himself, will he not give you faith, whereby alone his merits can be applied to your hearts?

Alas ! why do we not entertain more worthy, more loving thoughts of Christ ? Or do you think he will have mercy on others, and not on you ? But are you not sinners ? And did not Jesus Christ come into the world to save sinners ? If you say you are the chief of sinners, I answer, that will be no hindrance to your salvation ; indeed it will not, if you lay hold on him by faith. Read the evangelist, and see how kindly he behaved to his disciples, who fled from and denied him. Go tell my brethren, says he ; he does not say, go tell those traitors, but, go tell my brethren, and Peter. As though he had said, go tell my brethren in general, and poor Peter in particular, that I am risen again. Oh, comfort his drooping heart ; tell him I am reconciled to him. Bid him weep no more so bitterly ; for though with oaths and curses he thrice denied me, yet I died for his sins, and I am risen again for his justification. I freely forgive all. Thus slow to anger, and of great kindness, was our all-merciful high priest. And do you think he has changed his nature, and forgets poor sinners, now he is exalted to the right-hand of God ? No, he is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever, and sitteth there only to make intercession for us. Come then, ye harlots, come then ye publicans, come ye most abandoned sinners, come and believe on Jesus Christ. Though the whole world despise and cast you out, yet he will not disdain to take you up. Oh amazing ! Oh infinitely condescending love ! Even you he will not be ashamed to call his brethren. And Oh ! how will you escape, if you neglect such a glorious offer of salvation ? What would the damned spirits now in the prison of hell, give, if Christ was so freely offered to their souls ? And why are we not lifting up our eyes in torments ? Does any one, out of this great multitude, dare say he does not deserve damnation ? If not, why are we left, and others taken away by death ? What is this, but an instance of God's free grace, and sign of his good will towards us ? Oh then, let God's goodness lead us to repentance ! Oh, let there be joy in heaven over some of us repenting ! Though we are in a field, yet I am persuaded the blessed angels are

now hovering around us, and long, as the heart panteth after the water-brooks, to sing a song of praise and joy for your conversion. Blessed be God, I hope their joy will be fulfilled. An awful silence appears amongst us, and I have good hope that the words, which the Lord has enabled me to speak in your ears this day, have not altogether fallen to the ground. Your tears and deep attention are an evidence that the Lord God is amongst us of a truth. Come, ye Pharisees, come and see, in spite of your satanical rage and fury, the Lord Jesus is getting himself the victory. And, brethren, I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, if but one soul of you, by the blessing of God, be brought to think savingly of Jesus Christ this day, I care not, if my enemies were permitted to thrust me into an inner prison, and put my feet fast in the stocks as soon as I have delivered this sermon. Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for you all, is, that you may be saved. For this cause I follow my master without the camp. I care not how much of this sacred reproach I bear, so that some of you be converted from the error of your ways, I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. Ye men, ye devils, do your worst! When Christ, who is our life, and whom I have now been preaching, shall appear I, also, together with his despised little ones, shall appear with him in glory. And then what will you think of Christ? I know what you will think of him you will then think him to be the fairest among ten thousand. You will then think and feel him to be a just though a sin-avenging judge. Oh then be ye persuaded to kiss him, lest he be angry, and you be banished for ever from the presence of his glory. Behold I come to you, as the angels did to Lot. My brethren flee, flee for your lives, haste, linger no longer in your spiritual Sodom; for otherways you will be eternally destroyed. Numbers, no doubt, amongst you may regard me no more than Lot's sons-in-law regarded him, I am persuaded I seem to you as one that mocks; but I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not; as sure as fire and brimstone rained from the Lord out of heaven, to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah so surely, at the great day

shall the vials of God's wrath be poured out upon you, if you do not think seriously, and act agreeably to the gospel of the Lord's Christ. Behold I have told you before. I pray God, all you that forget him may seriously think on what has been said, before he pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you. *Amen.*



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